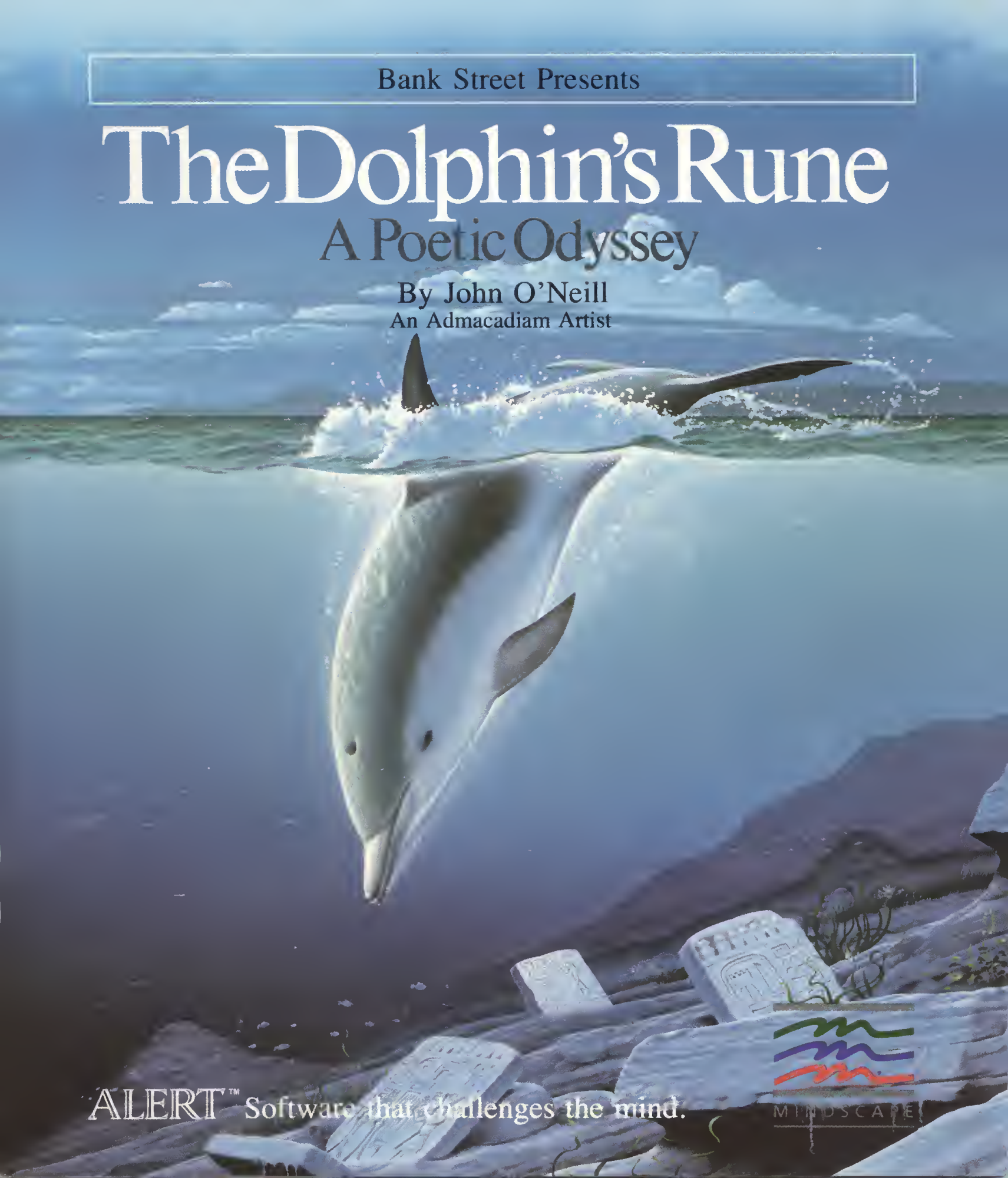
Bank Street Presents

The Dolphin's Rune

A Poetic Odyssey

By John O'Neill

An Admacadiam Artist



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MINDSCAPE

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A Poetic Odyssey

By John O'Neill
An Admacadiam Artist

Mindscape, Inc.
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, Illinois 60062
An SFN Company

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Preface

By Richard R. Ruopp, President
Bank Street College of Education

When I first saw *The Dolphin's Rune*, I was immediately fascinated. It was radically different from any other software I had seen or heard about—here was an intricate mix of compelling visual images and sounds, and a serious, difficult puzzle that required translation of mysterious hieroglyphs into a mystical poem. It was, I decided, a new art form.

As captivating as the program itself was its creator, John O'Neill, an English painter and sculptor. John presented his vision of a new school of interactive electronic art, which he named "Admacadiam." Admacadiam will unite painters, poets, storytellers, and musicians to create new kinds of works that have to be *experienced*, not just seen. In an age where many of us decry television, with its passivity and with its often distorted presentation of life, violence, and death, such an in-gathering of artists would not only be significant, but would herald the coming of a new art for a new age.

The Bank Street College of Education and Mindscape offer *The Dolphin's Rune: A Poetic Odyssey* as a step toward that new art. This program suggests the experiential, interactive art that ultimately awaits as new software will make full use of the multi-dimensional power of tomorrow's microcomputers. The results we envision, which to some extent are here with us already in *The Dolphin's Rune,* are multi-dimensional, multi-sensory experiences that will entertain, instruct, and uplift.

We hope you enjoy *The Dolphin's Rune* and that you find in it a new combination of art and science, of the sensual and the intellectual, of instruction and inspiration.

Introduction

The Dolphin's Rune: A Poetic Odyssey is probably unlike any computer program you've ever experienced. Like a complex jigsaw puzzle, it will provide days—perhaps weeks or months—of challenge. Your goal: to survive the ocean's perils to make nine trips to the seabed. Each successful trip offers one more encrypted stanza of a poem, a poem that when properly deciphered is actually a complex riddle embedded with clues to a secret location somewhere on Earth. Once you've unlocked the ninth stanza, one of three additional stanzas is revealed. Only one of these extra stanzas provides more clues; the other two are "red herrings"—ocean creatures designed to obscure your understanding and confuse your intellect.

The Dolphin's Rune combines joystick action with intense intellectual challenge; you must be adroit, persistent, and mentally astute to succeed. You, as the dolphin, must survive the dangers of sharks and fishing nets. Even more difficult, you must master the dolphin skill of swimming through tumultuous color currents. Once you demonstrate your ability to negotiate the ocean environment, the sea becomes alive with dolphin sounds. You will be led to seabeds to search for clues that release dolphin hieroglyphs, fragments of an epic poem composed in a runic alphabet, that contain the key to the secret of *The Dolphin's Rune*.

Mindscape and the Bank Street College of Education take great pride in presenting *The Dolphin's Rune*. This program, with its mythic aura, its challenge, and its beauty, represents a new dimension of player-computer interaction: as you join the dolphin on its undersea exploration, its journey becomes your own.

Loading the Game

First turn on the TV or monitor, disk drive, and computer. (Do not turn the computer on or off while the disk is in the drive.) Plug your joystick into Port 2. Next, insert the game disk (with label up and toward you) in the disk drive. Type:

LOAD "DOLPHIN",8,1

Be sure to include the quotation marks and commas. Press RETURN and wait until the game is loaded.

The game opens in an underwater environment filled with watery sounds. Fish and other ocean creatures pass by while your dolphin swims through bubbles and shafts of light penetrating from the surface. This initial phase of *The Dolphin's Rune* is an overture, a prelude to the deeper, more complex world to follow. If you just left the computer untouched at this point, you'd have a beautiful, glowing fishtank. Now is a good time to relax and take in the beauty of the ocean environment, and to practice your swimming.

Swimming

Your dolphin moves in a three-dimensional world; it swims not only back and forth and up and down on the screen, but toward you and away from you and in all directions diagonally. Make the dolphin swim by moving the joystick:

- Pushing right on the stick swims your dolphin right.
- Pushing left on the stick swims your dolphin left.
- Pushing all the way forward on the stick swims your dolphin away from you.
- Pulling all the way back (toward you) on the stick swims your dolphin toward you.
- Pushing all the way forward while pressing on the joystick button swims your dolphin up.
- Pulling all the way back (toward you) while pressing on the joystick button swims your dolphin down.
- Pushing diagonally on the joystick (such as forward and to the right) swims your dolphin diagonally.

You can put your dolphin into an "automatic" swimming mode by pushing your joystick handle in the direction you want your dolphin to swim and then releasing the handle.

As you swim, you will find that there are six physical environments in your dolphin's world. Above the sea is the blue sky. The sea itself is divided into five thermoclines, or temperature levels—the water gets cooler and cooler toward the

bottom. As you dive down and pass through the thermoclines, the color of the water changes from light green, to light blue, to blue, to gray, to black. This last thermocline includes seabeds of coral and other things in shades of black and gray. Later on in the game you will see these seabeds in color. You will also travel through the sky and see visions. But for now, you need to learn how to survive in the ocean.

Breathing

Dolphins are air-breathing mammals, like humans. To swim underwater, they must hold their breath. If they run out of air while underwater, they will drown. Your dolphin can dive or swim in the underwater environment for eight minutes before it must take a breath of air at the surface. For the first six minutes, your dolphin remains a steady, silvery blue color, but during the last two minutes the color begins flashing, faster and faster, as air runs out. You must swim all the way to the surface to get a breath of air.

Dangers

Drowning If you do not surface for air soon enough, your dolphin will die, and you must start *The Dolphin's Rune* over from the beginning. (Press the space bar to restart.)

Sharks Sharks can appear during any part of the game, although they are only dangerous in the top two thermoclines of the ocean. They come in a variety of colors, so you must identify them by shape. Three shark bites, accumulated during the course of play, will kill your dolphin—even if you receive the third bite when you're on your ninth dive to the seabed and are close to completing the poem. You will know if your dolphin is bitten; piercing noise and flashing colors indicate its pain.

Tuna Nets

The tuna nets that sometimes appear at the ocean surface pose the most serious danger. As you enter the top two thermoclines, you may hear the sound of a motorboat. Then the net appears, a small grid that moves across the screen. Your dolphin will be slightly panicked, and you'll lose some control of your joystick. Your dolphin can try to escape in three ways: by outrunning the net, by leaping over it, or by diving under it.

Outrunning the net is possible but difficult, since it takes longer than leaping or diving, and the longer it takes to escape, the more panicked and out of control your dolphin will become.

Leaping out of the net is a better strategy. There will be a flash, and if you've made it you will find your dolphin in open water. If you don't, your dolphin will be back in the net. You can continue to leap. As time passes, however, your dolphin will become more and more exhausted and panicked, and you will have less and less control of your joystick.

If you have enough air, the best way to escape is usually to dive down. With luck, the bottom of the net will still be open, so your dolphin can dive down to the third thermocline and wait until the tuna trawler passes. If the bottom of the net has been drawn shut, however, you must head for the surface again and try to leap out of the net.

If you do become caught in the net, it will draw tighter and tighter. The sea will change from blue to brown, and eventually to bright red, as tuna are slaughtered within the closing loop of the net. More and more, your panicked and nauseated dolphin loses control. As the water turns red with the blood of tuna, the mesh of the net becomes less distinguishable, and soon—if you cannot jump free of the net in a last burst of energy—the screen will go bright red as your dolphin dies. You must restart *The Dolphin's Rune* from the beginning.

Color Currents

As your dolphin swims back and forth in the blue underwater environment of the third thermocline down, you will discover areas of colored particles, almost like clouds of color. When you find an area of colored particles, called a "color current," swim your dolphin toward it and then "into" it by swimming forward (pushing the joystick away from you). As your dolphin moves closer, the color current will become bigger and bigger. This is the wall, or outer edge, of a color current. If you stay at this edge for a few moments, the color current will engulf your dolphin within its particles and will eventually cover the entire screen.

Your dolphin will suddenly be inside a tunnel of color, swimming against a powerful current. Bubbles and debris burst past it. As your dolphin swims in the color current, you can see directly ahead the small, silvery form of a phantom dolphin—your guide through the maze of the color current. This phantom dolphin always swims near the center of the current, and if you stay as close as possible to it, you will be guided correctly. If your dolphin strays from the phantom dolphin, it's likely to hit the inner wall of the current tunnel and break through, tumbling back out into the normal underwater environment. If this happens, you'll have to locate this same color current again.

You can increase your dolphin's swimming speed as it travels through the color current by pressing and holding the joystick button. Reduce its speed to normal by releasing the button.

Swimming within the boundaries of the color current is the first major dolphin skill you must master. Until you do, the buffeting water will quickly toss your dolphin out of the current tunnel, back into a normal ocean environment. Once you successfully navigate a color current, you will be rewarded by a vision.

The First Vision

After your dolphin negotiates its first color current, it is swept out of the sea and makes an arching leap into the sky. During this leap, you experience a mystical dolphin insight, a dream vision that will provide some clues about the meaning of life and about dolphin lore. Your leap takes you upward through sunsets and dawns, through days of red suns and nights of shooting stars.

The insight ends as the screen becomes a different color. Now, as a result of your insight, you hear a set of sounds: a particular pattern of dolphin clicks and whistles that is associated with the new color flashed on the screen. Remember this color and the click-and-whistle pattern, for they identify the color current you have to find next. (Should you forget them, you can press the joystick button to recall the color and sound.)

After this first insight, your dolphin will suddenly be back in the ocean, in an underwater environment that has become alive with dolphin sound and song. These clicks and whistles emanate from color currents. They actually come from the dolphin runes lying on the seabeds and travel up through the color currents in the rest of the ocean.

Sounds from Color Currents

When you began *The Dolphin's Rune*, you located a color current by following particles of color. Now that you have had your first insight, or dream vision, your hearing has become far more acute. The color currents are still visible, but now you can *hear* them as well.

You seek a click-and-whistle phrase identical to the phrase heard earlier, as you came out of the insight. It is the sound emanating from the first set of dolphin runes you must find, coming from the seabed through the current of the color you saw as your insight ended. You may have to pass by several color currents before finding the right one. Don't get discouraged; this process often takes patient

searching of your underwater environment. If you don't recall the exact color and/or the exact sound phrase you're looking for, press the joystick button.

When you hear the right clicks and whistles, look for the right color current, which is close by. As you swim your dolphin toward the current, the click-and-whistle phrase repeats faster. When you find the color current, move your dolphin toward it until it fills the whole screen. Once again, you find your dolphin swimming against powerful currents within a curving color tunnel. Remember to keep your dolphin close to the smaller, phantom dolphin. If you hit the inner wall of the current tunnel, you'll find yourself in the normal underwater environment, and you'll have to locate this same color current again.

As your dolphin swims through the color current this time (and every time from now on), you hear a series of pulses. The pulses repeat more and more rapidly until they are *almost* one continuous sound. At that point, you know that the current has taken your dolphin to the right place in the seabed. It is now time for your dolphin to break through the color current wall and enter the seabed environment. If you're not pressing it, press the joystick button and push or pull hard in any direction on the joystick to make your dolphin break through the current wall. If your dolphin doesn't break out fast enough, and therefore misses the correct area of the seabed, it will be thrown out into an upper part of the ocean environment, and you'll have to find this same color current again. But if you succeed in breaking out, the dolphin will emerge into one of several possible sea bottom environments, with coral reefs and rocks, that echo eerie sounds. Your dolphin must explore the underwater environment to uncover runes, strange characters which release hieroglyphs you must decipher to find the first stanza of the poem.

Taking a Breath from the Bottom

Your dolphin can run out of air even down at the bottom of the sea. Fortunately, if you've come this far and your dolphin needs to breathe, you may swim your dolphin straight up to the surface to breathe and then descend *directly* down again to continue your exploration of the seabed; it's not necessary to go through a color current to reach the seabed once you're already there exploring. Make sure, however, that your ascent and descent are strictly vertical; if you stray too far to either side, you may lose the seabed and have to go through the color current again. Beware also of tuna nets and sharks as you surface for air.

Finding the Rune and Releasing the Hieroglyphs

On your first visit to the sea bottom, you only have to find one rune. You do this by swimming around and passing near every possible object or area, including moving objects like fish, until eventually something lights up and makes a single sound. That is a rune. Passing near it releases a hieroglyph fragment. A line of dolphin hieroglyphs will appear on the bottom of the screen. This is a fragment from the dolphin lore.

Interpreting the Hieroglyph Fragment

When the hieroglyph fragment is released, your dolphin will begin swimming back and forth by itself, not controlled by the joystick. During this suspended animation and during the dream visions are the *only* times that the dolphin will not run out of air.

Look at the hieroglyph fragment. Use the Dictionary of The Dolphin's Runes (in this manual) to translate it. You can see what comprises each single hieroglyph block by moving the joystick to the left and the right; each individual symbol fits within the box that moves as you move the joystick.

Write down your translation on a piece of paper. It will not make much sense at first because dolphin thought and language are structurally different from human thought and language. You must rearrange the blocks of words and phrases until your English translation on paper makes sense. Take note that some of the hieroglyphs at the bottom of the screen are already in the correct position; each of these has a little flag over it.

Arranging the Hieroglyphs on the Screen

Once your translation on paper seems to make sense, rearrange the dolphin hieroglyphs on the screen so they follow your translation. To move the hieroglyphs, use your joystick to position the box on the screen. Press the joystick button to magnetize the box and pick up a hieroglyph. Move the joystick to position the hieroglyph. Press the joystick button to release the hieroglyph from the box. When you drop a hieroglyph onto another one, the box automatically picks up the second hieroglyph. Move that second hieroglyph to where you want it, then press the joystick button to release it.

The New Vision

Once you have adjusted the dolphin hieroglyphs correctly, your dolphin is very suddenly transported out of the seabed. It leaps into another visual insight sequence that returns you to the original dream vision and unveils new visual layers of dolphin lore. Each time you earn another insight by translating hieroglyphs, the dream vision will expand, until in the final vision you will see stars growing,

exploding into super novae, turning into shooting stars and then into comets, and comets that change to the phantom silver dolphins that guide you through the color currents.

Toward the end of a visual insight, as your dolphin falls back into the sea, a specific phrase of clicks and whistles will ring out, providing the sound clue for the next color current you must find.

Continuing the Game: Nine Hieroglyph Fragments

Your dolphin is underwater again, looking for the color current from which this new click and whistle phrase emanates. When you find this color current, swim your dolphin into the current as you did before. Keep your dolphin within the current, following your phantom dolphin guide, until the pulsing sound almost merges into a single sound. At that point, break through the current wall by pressing the joystick button and pulling the joystick hard in any direction. Your dolphin emerges into another, different seabed.

Because this is the second seabed you've reached through a color current, you must find *two* runes before the next hieroglyph fragment is released. Again, any object, such as a fish, a turtle, an octopus, or a patch of weeds, may light up and make a sound. If you hear only one sound, that rune is the *first* rune. If you hear two sounds, that rune is the *second* rune. The hieroglyph fragment will only be released when the two runes are touched in order. The first rune, with a single sound, must always be touched before the second rune, with its two sounds, is touched.

This becomes more difficult once you're exploring the eighth and ninth seabeds. But although each rune must be touched in order, the order does not have to be uninterrupted. For example, if you find the first, second, and third runes, and then touch the fifth rune, you do not have to start over with the first rune; simply find the fourth rune and touch it, then go on to the fifth rune.

When the hieroglyph fragment is finally released after you've found all the runes associated with that seabed, your dolphin once again enters its suspended animation phase, swimming back and forth. Once again, you must translate the hieroglyph and rearrange it correctly. When this is done, your dolphin enters yet another visual insight sequence, and then you begin again with another color current.

This pattern continues until your dolphin passes through nine color currents and releases nine different hieroglyph fragments, each of which you must successfully translate in turn. Remember, each time your dolphin goes down to the seabed, it needs to touch one more rune to release the hieroglyph fragment—three runes the third time, four runes the fourth time, and so on. Remember, too, that runes must be touched in the right order. The deeper into the game you get, the more memory and concentration this requires.

The Poem

After you successfully gather and translate all nine hieroglyph fragments, the complete poem appears on the screen at one time, in the correct order.

But dolphin language is exceedingly complex. Even now the poem has further depths. Right before your eyes the full nine fragments dissolve and rearrange themselves into an additional hieroglyph, an additional stanza: this is a pearl within an oyster, a tale within the tale, a poem within the poem.

Again, you must use your Dictionary of the Dolphin's Runes. This final fragment, however, is one of three such fragments that randomly appears. Only one of the three will be the legitimate tenth stanza that will help you complete the dolphin's quest, which is to solve the poem's riddle by uncovering the name of the secret location hidden within the ten stanzas. Because only one of the possible three final stanzas is helpful, you may need to begin *The Dolphin's Rune* anew and journey through all nine seabeds several times before all three final fragments are revealed and you can determine which can help you unravel the dolphin's riddle.

Strategies for Playing

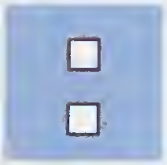
Even very experienced computer users will find that *The Dolphin's Rune: A Poetic Odyssey* requires patience, practice, and perseverance to master. To help you master the program as quickly as possible, we've included this list of strategies. These strategies are designed to help speed your playing of *The Dolphin's Rune*. And although speed itself is not important, remember that the faster you progress, the fewer times you'll have to surface for air and encounter the dangers of tuna nets and sharks.

- All the color currents are located in the *top third* of the *third* thermocline. When the dolphin first appears on the screen, and after every dream vision, it's in the middle of the third thermocline. Swim the dolphin up a bit, then go either left or right in a gentle up-and-down zig-zag. You should find a color current fairly easily.
- Press the joystick button for speed *whenever* you are in a color current; otherwise, you may waste precious seconds of air. Be careful, though: it's easy to miss the correct break-away point in the current when you're going fast.
- If your dolphin gets a shark bite within the first third of the game (within the first three visits to the bottom), consider starting over. Chances are great that you will indeed accumulate two other shark bites before you reach the ninth level. If you make it beyond the third level without any shark bites, you have a good chance of making it all the way through the game—if you can translate the hieroglyphs.
- Try to search the seabeds for runes as efficiently as possible. The seabeds are roughly divided into nine sections, three by three. Think about this organization and remember where you've been, so you don't unnecessarily return to an area you've already searched. You might want to start in one corner of the seabed and make your way back and forth diagonally down to the opposite corner.
- Make a map of the seabed and note where you find runes. This will help when you get above the fourth or fifth level and the order and location of the runes starts to get confusing.

- When you translate a hieroglyph fragment for the first time, consider putting your translation of each hieroglyph on a separate piece of paper. Then, you can move the pieces of paper around as you rearrange your translation to find the correct order.
- As you work to put your translation in the correct order, try to figure out whether that particular hieroglyph fragment has a rhyme scheme and/or rhythm. This may help you find the proper order when just plain English won't.
- Make sure you write down your translations of the hieroglyphs and save them. Because you can't save your progress onto a disk every time you turn the machine off, you have to go through the program from the beginning again. If you have your translations from a previous playing ready, you can do this relatively quickly.

Dictionary of the Dolphin's Runes

I was most lost



washed so pale

forever

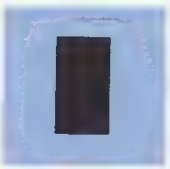
thus left

I could say more

who sang so high

round

said



when

dolphin bone

the world was

rained

alone

pure emerald

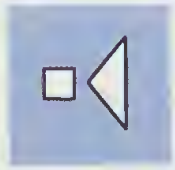
this pearl

and came

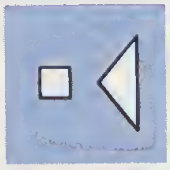
and I

in joy

harsh ark



dolphin memory tells me much



great cold cave

and

slept

I will I said

and dry child's

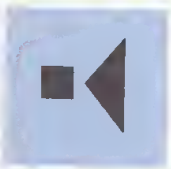
sweetly

twelve

ran cold

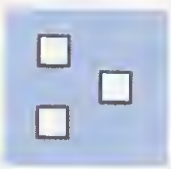
to

and shall

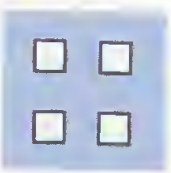


becomes

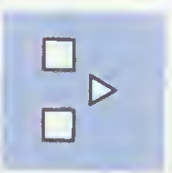
and cracked bone



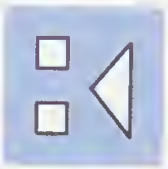
cold milky eye



dry world



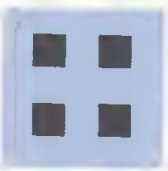
who will go?



mother father

death drops

have we woven



the sea

I turned again

into

that pearl

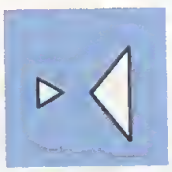
when the moon

through

precious

turned to ice

watery trails



seasons turned

then

turned old

sink to

then fell

a sea of laughter

real

bottom of

top

we must carry

or only sea strewn sound?

but someone must pay

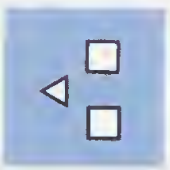
when the stars

this watery bed

north and south

when the sun

gave me



was free

pass by

a pearl

of bones

and silent silver of fish

the sky

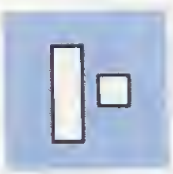
fish fast fly

an ocean of tears

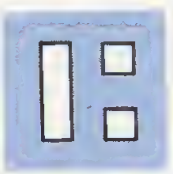
was gone

spear and shark

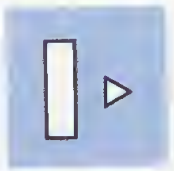
beyond



is it

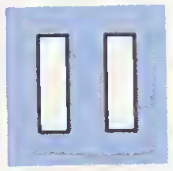


or false fashion of air?

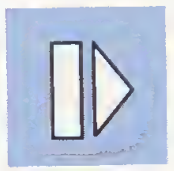


caverns of sorrow

chambers of grief

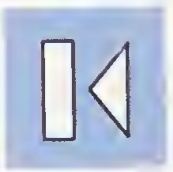


I dove



pure sun

Grath called from afar



said he

the floor

brother sister

black sky and
bright seas

mirrors

under

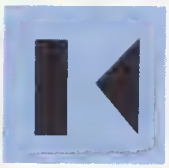
the mirror of

I fell

in peace

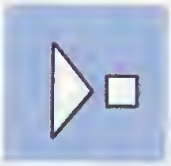
I turned back

deep darkly down



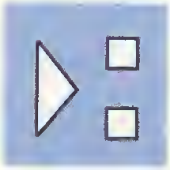
there a grave

saw

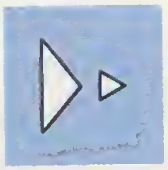


he told me

was high

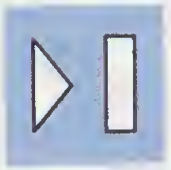


to heavens

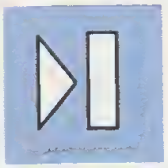


it was no dream

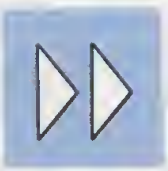
both sound and resound



or precious past hope?



nights in death



danced night seas

full awake

that passed night into day

the water swept me

of whale

child of

blue sky and gray seas

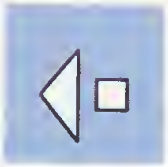
journeys done

days

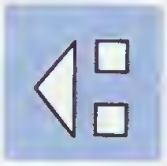
fair

earth sky world

when air



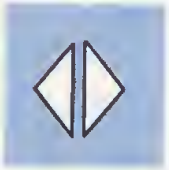
have we lived



we must now know

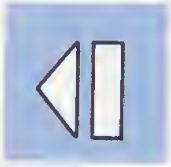
this savory home

the ocean danced

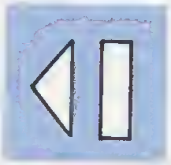


a star

and whale's crimson opera

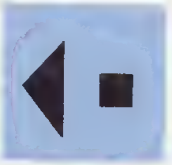


the ocean slept



or even more real?

where



past sigh of seaweed

laid with

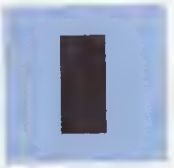
leapt day seas

kept my song

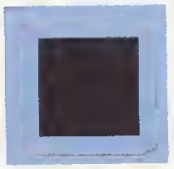
the oldest one's

the price

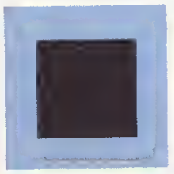
past blood and blood



well I cannot say



a large star



darkness

MINDSCAPE

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